

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO†

### EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

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#### From Some Editorial Notes:

**Legislative Enactments.**—Quite a number of public health bills that did not touch upon the "administrative policy" one way or the other, were passed. Whether they will be signed or not of course remains to be seen. When the thirty-day period is over and things are finally settled, they will be discussed. It may be said, however, that all the bills prepared by the Tuberculosis Commission (they will be found in the report of the Commission published in this issue) were passed. Nearly all the bills proposed by the State Board of Health, we understand, were also passed. Later on it will be possible to give some idea of the nature of such of these bills as become laws and what may be expected to result from them.

**New State Insane Asylum.**—The legislature, which might well be called the latest experiment in state insane asylums, has adjourned with a record never equaled anywhere at any time. It is conservatively estimated that it will take California at least fifty years to get over the damage done in the last four months. The philanthropic suggestion of Mr. Johnson in his gubernatorial message to the assembled lunatics when they began their banded play last January to the effect that any physician licensed to practice medicine anywhere in the United States ought to be given a license in California without further formality, had its due effect; some thirty bills amending the Medical Act or creating new medical laws were introduced; they were nearly all bad; destructive. The prize freak that finally passed, in spite of protests from every school of medicine and from every element of the community, was Senate Bill 813. It is a heart-breaking task to discuss it; it will be found printed in full on another page. It is seldom that a supreme court says anything that is good; but the Supreme Court of California went out of its way to say that it was a wise provision of the legislature (of 1901) to make the standard of the Association of American Medical Colleges the minimum standard for medical education in this state because it is a flexible standard. This "wise provision" the legislature of 1913 has eliminated! There are some parts of this bill which may seem good to you as you read it; but do not be fooled—it is as full of holes and bugs as an infected sponge. Whether the Governor will sign the bill or not, is now the all-important question.

**Insurance Companies' Lies.**—Nearly all the insurance companies that are writing indemnity insurance for physicians—insurance against malpractice suits—have been writing and continue to write lies about the Medical Defense of the State Society. And when they do not write absolute and actual lies, they write such clever half-truths that the idea conveyed is just as distorted as though a direct lie had been stated. . . .

**Lack of Support.**— . . . If you would take the trouble to look through the advertising pages of your own JOURNAL you would find that nearly everything you may want is therein advertised; and if you would deal with your advertisers—and let them know that you are doing so and taking an interest in them—such an answer would not have been received in this particular case; the advertiser would have continued to help support your JOURNAL. Everything you see in the advertising pages of your JOURNAL is good—remember that. Also remember that the more interest you take in your advertisers the more interest they will take in your JOURNAL and the better journal you will have. But

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† This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of Association work some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and new members.

## BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA†

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M.D.

Secretary-Treasurer

#### News

"Hospital routine of an alleged 'abortion mill' at 327 Fillmore Street, was suddenly disrupted yesterday by police raiders. Nine women patients, one of them in bed, were discovered in the place, where a thriving business in illegal surgery has been conducted over a considerable period of time, officers said. Inez L. Brown, well known to police, was taken into custody as the hospital operator, along with Margie Silver, assertedly employed there as a nurse, and booked on a charge of criminal abortion. . . . The Brown woman, volubly protesting that her establishment was only a massage parlor, at first refused admittance to a rear apartment on the third floor. Finally, changing her mind, she showed police into a tiled 'laboratory' or operating room, where instruments and medicinal solutions were found in abundance. She was arrested as the alleged owner of equipment in an abortion hospital raided at the same address in July, 1936, police records revealed. The entire third floor of the building was furnished in semi-hospital style, with eleven beds. Margie Silver, the alleged nurse, was taken to police headquarters for further questioning. (San Francisco Examiner, May 5, 1938.) "Inez Brown of abortion mill notoriety has for two years been fighting a \$72,500 federal income tax claim, files of a Superior Court lawsuit disclosed today. At one stage of the tax dispute, she was threatened with federal indictment for fraud and was saved by prompt action of an attorney who flew to Washington, pleadings of the lawsuit assert. Assets of the 47-year-old woman, who told raiding police at her Fillmore Street abortion mill last week she was 'just a poor woman trying to rent some rooms,' were listed at \$202,956.80 in 1936. The Government claims she failed to file a return on two-thirds of her income between the years 1928 and 1935. Such income as she did report she listed for 'nursing services,' it was learned. Treasury Department agents are checking her income tax returns for the years 1936 to 1938 inclusive, it was reported, as a result of disclosures last week that her income from abortions has reached as high as \$550 daily. Mrs. Brown is scheduled to appear before Superior Judge Edmund Mogan tomorrow to resume the civil lawsuit which arose out of a dispute over fees between her and the attorney who represented her before federal authorities in the income tax case. Hartley Russell, tax attorney, said that he was reasonably entitled to \$7,000 for representing her and that she has paid only \$1,000. Suit against her was brought in the name of V. Snediker, holding an assignment of the claim. She was sued as Inez L. Burns, her legal name. She is the wife of Joseph F. Burns, former assemblyman. Admitting existence of the federal claim, Mrs. Brown claimed Mr. Russell terminated their relationship by agreement. She asks return of \$2,000 which she said she paid him." (San Francisco News, May 10, 1938.)

"News that Dr. Romano Nicholas Trotsky (Dr. Romano Lukian) was being held for wife desertion in San Angelo, Texas, today recalled a series of hoaxes in the Bay area. Thomas Hunter (Special Agent) and Dr. Charles B. Pinkham of the State Board of Medical Examiners said Doctor Trotsky was refused a medical license here, represented himself as a bachelor nephew of exiled Leon Trotsky and told a thrilling story of his 'escape' from Russia. His police record, according to Mr. Hunter, includes convictions for auto theft, forgery, swindling, violation of the state medical laws, and several suspended sentences for abortions" (San Francisco News, May 2, 1938). Newspaper reports relate that Trotsky was brought to Del Rio, Texas, for investigation by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service in reference to his entrance into the United States. (Previous entry, April, 1937.)

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† The office addresses of the California State Board of Medical Examiners are printed in the roster on advertising page 6.